



CASE STUDY

Altitude Sports

Customer retention



To reactivate and retain customers – and to transform them into frequent buyers – Altitude Sports turns to the power of catalogues.

Background

Montreal-based Altitude Sports is a leading online retailer of high end technical apparel, outerwear, footwear and gear. Whether used for the city or the outdoors, its products meet the fashion demands of its urban customers and stand up to the elements of Canada's extreme weather.

With over 90,000 products and more than 400 Canadian and global brands, the company has been growing fast since 2011 when it decided to focus its energy on e-commerce.

Just as its product line changes with seasonal and fashion trends, its customer retention strategy has evolved in the increasingly competitive retail market.

“

If you're only putting your money into one channel, you're missing an opportunity. When looking at customer retention, people who know you and your brand react really well when you send them something special through the mail.”

Maxime Dubois

Co-Chief Executive Officer, Altitude Sports

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Keeping the brand top of mind

After Altitude Sports transformed from a brick-and-mortar store to a pure e-commerce retailer, the company used only online marketing to achieve its acquisition and retention goals. That is, until Canada Post introduced co-CEOs Maxime Dubois and Alexandre Guimond to the power of direct mail.

It was three years ago when the company began experimenting with mini-catalogues to maximize its customer retention strategy.

Making the most of the space offered by catalogues, Altitude Sports used bold visuals and compelling product descriptions to capture customers' attention. But it didn't stop there. The company coupled its stand-out mini-catalogues with a specific targeting strategy, which together yielded the results Dubois and his team were after.

While the company mainly uses e-mail marketing to speak to its frequent-purchasing customers, it integrates the physical component of mailed catalogues when working to retain less frequent customers, encouraging them to become frequent buyers.

For example, in the leadup to the critical 2018 Black Friday-Cyber Monday period, Altitude Sports sent mini-catalogues to 160,000 select customers. The high reactivation rate was attributed to the effect of the mini-catalogue, sent to clients who did not purchase 120 days beforehand but purchased 30 days after receiving the mini-catalogue.

"It's not just about a discount. The seasonal catalogues are a reminder that it's time to order from us. They help keep us top of mind with customers ready to purchase," says Dubois. "It helps us reactivate clients." For that 2018 campaign, Dubois says the 4.2% reactivation rate was "very satisfying."

Increasing share of heart

In addition to mini-catalogues, Altitude Sports produces two high-end coffee table magazines in the fall and spring for its high-value customers.



Their share-of-heart strategy is all about encouraging customers to better know the Altitude Sports story and build up their affinity.

"Most of our clients come to the site with something in mind," says Dubois. "But with the magazine they can discover new products, brands and trends. We don't show prices. It's different from a shopping perspective – it's a discovery perspective."

Dubois adds that the magazine – which is made from 100% recycled paper – is also a great opportunity to tell the stories of the trips its teams undertake to learn more about the brands the company carries, to places like Switzerland, Sweden, South Korea and the Rockies.

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